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## Statement of Representative Christopher Shays September 19, 2006

Last month British authorities announced they disrupted a terrorist plot to detonate as many as ten transatlantic aircraft leaving Heathrow for the United States. A London Metropolitan Police representative said the successful execution of this plot would have wrought “mass murder on an unimaginable scale.”

This is the most recent incident in a decades-long pattern of attempted and successful terrorist attacks against passenger airlines. In January 1995, Philippine authorities disrupted Operation Bojinka, which sought to blow up American passenger planes. On September 11, 2001, terrorists tragically used four aircraft to attack the United States.

Five years after September 11, in an international atmosphere of uncertainty, we continue to ask the question: “Is our country safer?”

The successful disruption of terrorist attempts like this London bomb plot indicates we may be headed in the right direction, and changes we have implemented—improved information sharing, surveillance, increased law

enforcement resources devoted to national security—appear to be helping thwart terrorist attacks.

But the fact that such threats remain—and that these threats exist on such a potentially massive scale—also warns us we must remain vigilant. Detection and prevention must be the first line of defense, enabling the intelligent infiltration of terrorist cells and prevention of their actions. All of this must take place within a comprehensive and transparent legal framework governing the counterterrorism apparatus.

The key in the disruption of the London bomb plot was that it was foiled before the would-be terrorists got to the airport. We understand local and international elements of the British counterterrorism apparatus helped secure the crucial tip that led to the capture of the suspects. They tracked terrorist financing evidence via intelligence cooperation with Pakistan. They were able to coordinate their internal counterterrorism components to react quickly, effectively and flexibly. And their authorities have the legal and jurisdictional tools to allow them to conduct a thorough investigation after the fact.

Today, we focus on the counterterrorism tools available to the British. Which of their tools does the United States share? What do we lack, and how could some of these tools usefully be adapted to an American environment? Which of these tools are more appropriate for Britain? And what are the implications for some of these tools coming face to face with American civil liberties regulations?

Our witnesses today, appearing together on one panel, will offer their perspectives from both sides of the Atlantic. We will hear testimony from Mr. Tom Parker, a former British counterterrorism official, and Baroness Falkner of Margravine, a Member of Parliament from the House of Lords who served as an adviser on Prime Minister Tony Blair's Taskforce on Muslim Extremism.

Our American witnesses include Mr. John Rollins, an expert on intelligence and homeland security from the Congressional Research Service; Dr. Jim Lewis, a specialist in surveillance technology and its implications from the Center for Strategic and International Studies; and Mr. David B. Rivkin, a

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*September 19, 2006*

former official at the White House, Justice and Energy Departments under Presidents Reagan and George H.W. Bush.

We are grateful to all of them for appearing before us today and we look forward to their testimony, and an interesting discussion.